

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claims 1-12 (Cancelled).

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): A method for manufacturing a fiber array for optical communication, the fiber array comprising: a substrate for inserting optical fibers therein; and a press plate for pressing and fixing the inserted optical fibers, said substrate having a plurality of grooves into which said optical fibers are to be inserted, the accuracy of the center-to-center dimension between said grooves adjacent to each other being within $\pm 0.5 \mu\text{m}$, the degree of parallelization in the groove length direction between said grooves adjacent to each other being within ± 0.1 degree, said method comprising the steps of:

forming grooves into which said optical fibers are inserted in said substrate by pulsed laser beam machining;

etching the inner wall of said formed grooves after said laser beam machining;

inserting optical fibers into the formed grooves; and

joining and fixing said inserted optical fibers to said substrate and said press plate.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 13, wherein said pulsed laser beam is a femtosecond laser beam.

Claim 15 (Cancelled).

Response Under 37 CFR 1.116

Expedited Procedure

Examining Group 2874

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Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 13, wherein said etching is carried out with at least one inorganic acid selected from the group consisting of hydrofluoric acid, hydrochloric acid, nitric acid, and sulfuric acid.